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ABSTRACT

This report provides data on programs for adults in public library outlets, based on a survey conducted in Fall 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education (ED). The results are based on questionnaire data for 954 public library outlets in the United States. Responses were weighted to produce national estimates that represent all public library outlets in the United States. Chapter 2 presents information about adult literacy program offerings at public library outlets, including the types of literacy programs offered and the groups for which adult literacy programs are specifically offered. Information is also provided about reasons library outlets do not offer adult literacy programs. Chapter 3 reports on the types of adult lifelong learning programs offered by public library outlets, the groups for which such programs are specifically offered, and barriers to providing lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities. Chapter 4 provides information about the extent of Internet access for adults in public library outlets and barriers to providing Internet access. The concluding chapter summarizes the findings of this study. Technical information, including a detailed study methodology discussion and tables of standard errors for all data presented in this report are included in two appendices. A third appendix presents the questionnaire. Includes ten tables and three figures. (AEF)

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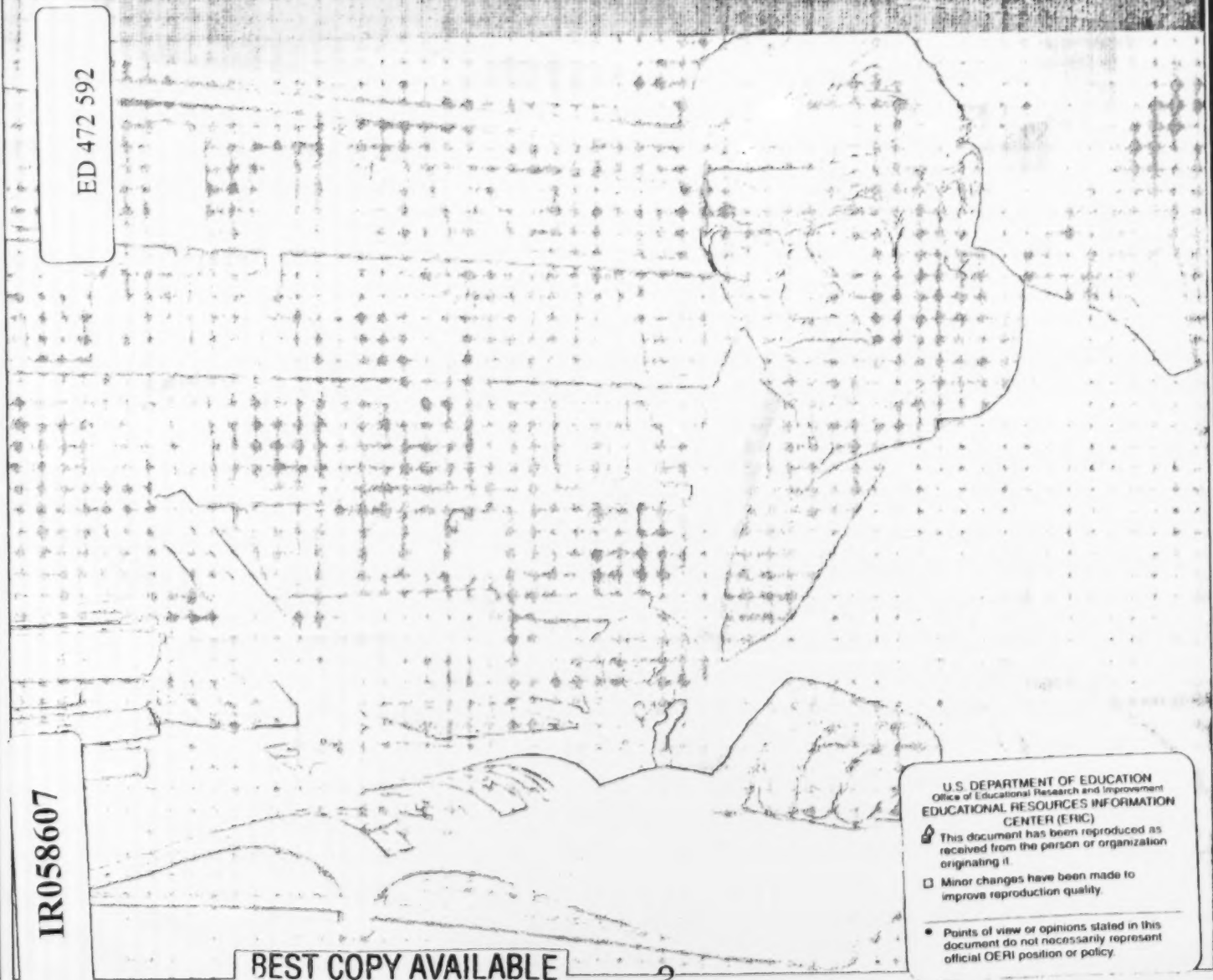
NCES
National Center for Education Statistics

Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets

FRSS
Fast Response Survey System

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
NCES 2003-010



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NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Statistical Analysis Report **November 2002**

Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Public libraries offer a variety of services to their communities, including collections, reference and referral, and programming. Depending on the type of community in which a library is located, the library may emphasize programs and other types of services for particular segments of the population (e.g., children, senior citizens, or those with limited English skills), or it may emphasize particular types of services (e.g., collections of various types or extensive reference assistance). This report provides nationally representative data on programs for adults in public library outlets. It is based on a survey conducted in fall 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education, using its Fast Response Survey System (FRSS). The survey—which defined "programs" as planned activities for groups or individuals that are offered by libraries to provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment—obtained information on three areas of interest for adult programming in public library outlets:

- adult literacy programs, including adult basic literacy skills, pre-GED, GED, family literacy, and English as a second language instruction for adults;
- programs for adult lifelong learning, such as book or film discussions, cultural performances, recreational activities, employment and career guidance, college/continuing education guidance, financial planning/investment information, parenting skills, citizenship preparation, and computer/Internet instruction; and
- provision of Internet access for adult independent use.

These activities form part of the numerous services that libraries may provide their users, and the degree of emphasis that individual libraries place on these activities may be related to the role that an individual library plays in its community.

This report provides information about programs for adults that are offered by public library outlets. As defined in the FRSS survey, a public library outlet is a unit (usually a building) that provides direct public library service. An outlet may be a main or central library, a branch library, or a bookmobile. An outlet was considered to offer a program if the outlet provided funding, materials, or staff to support the program or if the library system ran the program within or on behalf of the library outlet. Programs that used library space rented from the library or made available to outside groups by the library, but with no other involvement of the library outlet or system, were not considered offerings of the library outlet. Results are presented for public library outlets overall, and by outlet size (small, medium, and large, as measured by the number of persons who entered the library outlet in a typical week, referred to in this report as the number of library visits per week) and metropolitan status (urban, suburban, and rural).

Key Findings

Adult Literacy Programs

Public libraries are one source of adult literacy programming within communities. Literacy programming includes direct literacy instruction, as well as activities such as providing funding, materials, and staff to support the program of another literacy provider. The fall 2000 FRSS survey asked public library outlets about their adult literacy program offerings during the previous 12 months. Findings from the survey include the following:

- Adult literacy programs, including adult basic literacy skills, pre-GED, GED, family literacy, and English as a second language, were

offered by 17 percent of public library outlets (figure 2).

- The likelihood of offering adult literacy programs was related to outlet size, with 5 percent of small outlets, 19 percent of medium-sized outlets, and 31 percent of large outlets offering adult literacy programs (figure 2). Urban outlets offered literacy programs more often than outlets in rural areas (26 percent compared with 15 percent).

- Programs in adult basic literacy skills (defined as skills at the fourth-grade level and below) were offered by 63 percent of outlets that offered adult literacy programs (table 3). Pre-GED (defined as skills from the fifth- through the eighth-grade levels), GED (defined as skills from the ninth-grade level through high school equivalency), English as a second language, and family literacy programs were offered by 42 to 48 percent of outlets that offered adult literacy programs.

- About half of the outlets offering adult literacy programs offered such programs specifically for adults who were limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants (50 percent) or for parents (48 percent) (table 4). Adult literacy programs specifically for high school dropouts were offered by 40 percent of outlets offering adult literacy programs. About a quarter (26 percent) of outlets with adult literacy programs offered programs specifically for adults with learning disabilities, and 11 percent offered programs specifically for adults with hearing impairments.

- Outlets that did not offer adult literacy programs during the 12 months prior to the survey were asked to indicate how important various reasons were in the outlet's decision *not* to offer such programs. Not having the staff or resources to offer adult literacy programs was indicated as very important in the outlet's decision by 77 percent of outlets (table 5). About half of the outlets (53 percent) indicated that the presence of other groups or educational institutions in the community (including other library outlets) that offer adult literacy programs was very important in their decision not to offer such programs. An emphasis on other groups (e.g., children, senior citizens) in the outlet's programming was indicated as very important by 37 percent of outlets. The reason least often indicated as very important in the outlet's decision not to offer adult literacy programs was that the community served by the outlet does not have a strong need for adult literacy programs (20 percent); almost half of the outlets (48 percent) indicated that this reason was not important in their decision.

Lifelong Learning Programs

Lifelong learning services for adults encompass many kinds of activities and programs to meet the cultural, recreational, and educational needs of the adults served by library outlets. The fall 2000 FRSS survey asked public library outlets whether they offered nine types of adult lifelong learning programs during the 12 months prior to the survey, whether any lifelong learning programs were offered specifically for 5 listed groups of adults, and to what extent various factors were barriers to providing lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities. Results of the survey include the following:

- Computer/Internet instruction, offered by 56 percent of all public library outlets, was the most frequently offered type of adult lifelong learning program (table 7). Forty-three percent of outlets offered book/film discussions or presentations, 41 percent offered cultural performances, and 39 percent offered recreational activities, such as crafts, travel, or hobbies. Programs on parenting skills were offered by 20 percent of outlets, financial planning/investment information programs by 18 percent of outlets, employment/career guidance programs by 17 percent of outlets, and college/continuing education guidance programs by 15 percent of outlets. Programs for citizenship preparation were offered by 5 percent of outlets.

- Large and medium-sized outlets were more likely than small outlets to offer all the types

of adult lifelong learning programs except citizenship preparation programs, which did not vary significantly by outlet size (table 7). Large outlets were also more likely than medium-sized outlets to offer most of the programs, with the exception of programs on employment/career guidance and college/continuing education guidance. Urban outlets were more likely than rural outlets to offer all the types of lifelong learning programs except citizenship preparation and college/continuing education guidance programs.

- About a quarter of all outlets offered adult lifelong learning programs specifically for senior citizens or for parents (24 percent for each) (table 8). Programs specifically for adults who are limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants were offered by 9 percent of outlets, for adults with physical disabilities by 6 percent of outlets, and for adults with learning disabilities by 5 percent of outlets.

- All library outlets were asked to what extent certain factors were barriers to the outlet's offering lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities. Insufficient accessibility to library facilities for the disabled was not perceived to be a barrier to offering such programs by most libraries, with 70 percent of outlets indicating it was not a barrier (table 9). Insufficient accessibility was perceived to be a major barrier by 12 percent of outlets. The remaining factors (lack of staff training in working with adults with disabilities, lack of assistive/adaptive devices for adults with disabilities, and insufficient library materials for the blind or physically disabled) were rated as not a barrier by 17 to 24 percent of outlets and as a major barrier by 33 to 39 percent of outlets.

Internet Access

The Internet is a major tool for communication and for education and job-related tasks. Public libraries are one of the providers of Internet access to the public. The fall 2000 FRSS survey asked public library outlets whether they provided Internet access to adults for their independent use, and to what extent various factors were barriers to providing such access. Findings include the following:

- Most public library outlets (92 percent) reported providing Internet access to adults for their independent use (figure 3). Small outlets were less likely to provide Internet access than were medium-sized or large outlets (84 percent compared with 96 and 98 percent, respectively). No differences were observed by metropolitan status.

- All library outlets were asked to what extent various factors (insufficient space for computers, insufficient number of computers with Internet access, insufficient number of telecommunications lines for Internet access, lack of library staff to assist Internet users, and lack of specialized training among library staff) were barriers to providing Internet access to adults for their independent use. Across all public library outlets, these factors were generally not perceived as being major barriers to providing Internet access; the percentage of outlets rating each factor as a major barrier ranged from 9 percent for lack of specialized training among library staff to 29 percent for insufficient space for computers (table 11).

- There were differences in perceived barriers between the library outlets that provided Internet access and those that did not. All of the factors were more likely to be identified as major barriers by outlets that did not provide Internet access than by outlets that did provide Internet access (table 11).

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides data on programs for adults in public library outlets,[1] based on a survey conducted in fall 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education (ED). The survey—which defined "programs" as planned activities for groups or individuals that are offered by libraries to provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment—obtained information on three areas of interest for adult programming in public library outlets:

- adult literacy programs, including adult basic literacy skills, pre-GED, GED, family literacy, and English as a second language instruction for adults;
- programs for adult lifelong learning, such as book or film discussions, cultural performances, recreational activities, employment and career guidance, college/continuing education guidance, financial planning/investment information, parenting skills, citizenship preparation, and computer/Internet instruction; and
- provision of Internet access for adult independent use.[2]

These activities form part of numerous services that libraries may provide their users, and their emphasis in individual libraries may be related to the role that an individual library plays in its community.

The Public Library Association (PLA)[3] identified eight major roles that libraries can play in their communities: community activities center, community information center, formal education support center, independent learning center, popular materials library, preschoolers' door to learning, reference library, and research center (McClure et al. 1987). Libraries offer a variety of services, including collections, reference and referral, and programming. The roles identified by PLA help a library make decisions about priorities in these areas. Depending on the type of community in which the library is located, the library may emphasize programs and other types of services for particular segments of the population (e.g., children, senior citizens, or community members with limited skills in English or reading), or may emphasize particular types of services (e.g., collections of various kinds, extensive reference assistance, or recreational and cultural activities).

Many of the roles outlined by PLA relate to the ways in which a library supports the educational goals and needs of the community it serves. A study of the various roles of the library and their importance to their community (D'Elia 1993) found that people consider the public library's most important role to be supporting the educational needs of the community. According to D'Elia, the roles receiving the largest percentages of "very important" responses were the library as an educational support center for students of all ages (88 percent), a learning center for adult independent learners (85 percent), a discovery and learning center for preschool children (83 percent), a research center for scholars and researchers (68 percent), and a center for community information (66 percent).

[1] As defined in the questionnaire, a public library outlet is a unit (usually a building) that provides direct public library service. An outlet may be a main or central library, a branch library, or a bookmobile.

[2] Internet access for adult independent use is the availability of the Internet for adults to use without the participation of a library staff member in that use. For example, an adult would be able to log on to the Internet and search for information independently, rather than submitting a request for a library staff member to search for that information.

[3] The Public Library Association is one of the divisions of the American Library Association. The American Library Association is an organization of over 60,000 librarians, libraries, trustees, friends of libraries, and others interested in the educational, social, and cultural roles and responsibilities of libraries in society. It promotes and improves library service and librarianship through advocacy and by establishing standards of service, conducting research, and providing educational opportunities for library personnel.

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PLA also developed 13 "service responses" that provide library planners with a way to link identified community needs with specific library services and programs. In particular, "a service response is what a library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a set of well-defined community needs....Service responses...are very distinct ways that libraries serve the public" (Nelson 2001, p. 146). The 13 "service responses" are basic literacy, business and career information, commons,[4] community referral, consumer information, cultural awareness, current topics and titles, formal learning support, general information, government information, information literacy, lifelong learning, and local history and genealogy (many of which are included in this report). The planning process using these "service responses" stresses the importance of the connection between the needs of the community and the development of library services. One of the basic assumptions of PLA is that "excellence must be defined locally—it results when library services match community needs, interests, and priorities" (Nelson 2001, p. 1). Thus, in the view of PLA, the types of services (including programming) that libraries offer should reflect the needs of the communities they serve.

Although programming for adults has been recognized as important to libraries, there were no national data about what public libraries were doing to provide this programming. Consequently, three groups within ED requested that NCES conduct a national survey through its Fast Response Survey System (FRSS). The three data requesters were the Elementary, Secondary, and Library Studies Division of NCES; the National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning; and the National Library of Education. This report provides national data from this survey about three areas of interest for adult programming in public library outlets:[5] adult literacy programs, programs for adult lifelong learning, and Internet access for adult independent use. Particular attention is paid to adult literacy issues, and to programs that may be provided for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities, adults who have limited English proficiency and/or are recent immigrants, and parents.

Programming for adults in public library outlets has a potentially wide audience in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 209.1 million adults age 18 and over in the country in 2000 (Meyer 2001). Adults constituted 74 percent of the U.S. population in 2000, and the median age of the U.S. population continued to rise, increasing from 32.9 in 1990 to 35.3 in 2000. Further, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated in the mid-1990s that about 1 in 5 Americans had some kind of disability, and 1 in 10 had a severe disability (U.S. Department of Commerce 1997).[6] The likelihood of having a disability increased with age, with half of those 65 years old and older reporting a disability.

At the same time, the diversity of our population continues to increase. The Census Bureau reports that the foreign-born population of the United States numbered 31.1 million in 2000—the largest in U.S. history (U.S. Department of Commerce 2002). The number has climbed 57 percent since the 1990 census. The proportion of the U.S. population that was foreign born increased from 4.7 percent in 1970 to 11.6 percent in 2000. Approximately 52 percent of the foreign born

[4] According to the PLA, "A library that provides a Commons environment helps address the need of people to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues" (Nelson 2001, p. 65).

[5] Programming is provided by public libraries in many different ways, such as bringing in guest lecturers on various topics, providing individual or group instruction, and working with other organizations to offer a series of classes. In addition, programming may be provided by different library entities, including individual library outlets and administrative entities (more commonly known as library systems). Early in the development process of the survey, a decision was made to focus on information at the library outlet level, because it was thought that most programming actually took place at this level. As defined in the questionnaire, a public library outlet is a unit (usually a building) that provides direct public library service. An outlet may be a main or central library, a branch library, or a bookmobile. System-level data are not available for comparison with the outlet-level data collected in this FRSS survey.

[6] The Census Bureau collected this information as part of its Survey of Income and Program Participation for the October 1994 through January 1995 period.

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residents were from Latin American countries, and approximately 26 percent were from Asian countries. The Census Bureau estimates that 17.6 percent of the population 5 years and over in the United States spoke a language other than English at home in 2000 (U.S. Department of Commerce 2001).

Adult Literacy

The need for a literate and skilled adult population was officially recognized a decade ago when Congress created the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), an independent federal organization charged with leading the effort toward the United States becoming a fully literate nation in the 21st century. In the 1991 National Literacy Act, Congress defined literacy as "an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential."[7] NIFL estimates that nationally, fewer than 10 percent of adults who could benefit from literacy programs are currently being served.

The Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) in ED's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) supports a wide range of literacy activities. Among these are programs focused on family literacy, workplace education, and English literacy. OVAE also disseminates information about research, effective practices, and other resources in adult education and literacy through its Web site (http://www.ed.gov/offices/ OVAE/AdultEd/).

The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) was funded by Congress and conducted by NCES in 1992. According to NCES, the aim of NALS was "to document the English literacy of adults in the United States based on their performance across a wide array of tasks that reflect the types of materials and demands they encounter in their daily lives" (Sum 1999, p. xiii). NALS found that among the 191.3 million adults in the survey population in 1992, 40.0 million, or 21 percent, were in level 1 (the lowest level of proficiency) on the prose literacy scale, and 8.2 million (4 percent) correctly answered none of the test questions (Sum 1999). Literacy skills were related to various educational and labor force characteristics. As reported by NCES, "the main finding that pervades the data on education in the National Adult Literacy Survey is that literacy proficiency is strongly related to levels of formal schooling. Each successive level of formal education is accompanied by a rise in average literacy proficiencies" (Kaestle et al. 2001, p. xxv). In general, literacy proficiency is lowest for individuals who have not graduated from high school, higher for high school graduates and GED holders, and highest for individuals who have attended postsecondary schooling. This is particularly important in light of reports from the U.S. Census Bureau that approximately 17 percent of the U.S. population 18 years of age and older have an educational attainment below the level of high school graduate (Newburger and Curry 2000). NALS also found that literacy is related to labor force characteristics, with individuals who demonstrate higher levels of literacy more likely to be employed, work more weeks in a year, and earn higher wages than individuals demonstrating lower proficiencies (Kirsch et al. 1993; Sum 1999). Thus, literacy skills are related to many aspects of adult lives.

Public libraries are one source of adult literacy programs. According to the PLA, a library that provides basic literacy service "addresses the need to read and to perform other essential daily tasks" (Nelson 2001, p. 65). Literacy programming includes direct literacy instruction, as well as activities such as providing funding, materials, or staff to support the literacy program of another literacy provider. Public libraries also support adult literacy activities in other ways not measured in this survey, such as developing and maintaining literacy collections, building coalitions with literacy groups, and providing space to outside groups to support literacy activities. The NCES state library agency survey defines literacy program support in public libraries as "organized efforts to assist individuals with limited language and mathematical skills in developing skills in

[7] Information in this paragraph is from the Web site of the National Institute for Literacy (http://www.nifl.gov).

reading, writing, and computation that enable them to function in society without assistance from others" (Kroe, Garner, and Sheckells 2001, p. 156). In Fiscal Year 2000, 44 out of 51 state library agencies provided literacy program support to public libraries in their state (Kroe, Garner, and Sheckells 2001). However, no nationally representative information has been available about adult literacy programs in public library outlets. This report provides information about the extent to which public library outlets offer adult literacy programs, the types of literacy programs offered (e.g., adult basic literacy skills, GED, English as a second language), and the groups for which literacy programs are specifically offered (e.g., high school dropouts, adults who are limited English speaking or recent immigrants). Information is also provided about reasons that library outlets do not offer adult literacy programs.

Libraries and Lifelong Learning

Libraries provide learning opportunities to many kinds of people with various educational needs and preferences through diverse kinds of library collections, reference and information services, and programming, including outreach services. According to Van Fleet (1995, p. 4), "Library services have essentially the same goals for all patrons—to enrich leisure, to gather and disseminate information for effective living, and to provide for continued growth and learning throughout the lifespan. The specific manner in which these goals are fulfilled will vary according to community need and demand." This reflects the same stance taken by the PLA—that library services must match community needs, interests, and priorities, and the ways in which communities implement a service response will therefore vary significantly. According to the PLA, a library that provides a lifelong learning service response "helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities" (Nelson 2001, p. 65). Examples of possible programming components of lifelong learning service include how-to programs on topics of general public interest, and various kinds of cultural performances.

The National Household Education Survey estimated in 1996 that 44 percent of U.S. households had used a public library in the month prior to the interview, and 65 percent had used a public library in the past year (Collins and Chandler 1997). The public library services for which the highest percentages of households reported library use in the past month were for enjoyment or hobbies, including borrowing books and tapes or attending activities (32 percent); getting information for personal use, such as consumer or health issues, investments, and so on (20 percent); and using library services or materials for a school or class assignment (19 percent). Fewer households reported using public library services for keeping up to date at a job (8 percent), getting information to help find a job (5 percent), attending a program for children (4 percent), or working with a tutor or taking a class to learn to read (1 percent).

This report provides information about the types of lifelong learning programs for adults offered by public library outlets, and groups for which lifelong learning programs are specifically offered (e.g., adults with disabilities, parents). Although libraries offer many types of lifelong learning programs, the survey focused on a subset of programs. Specifically, the lifelong learning programs included on the questionnaire are programs on citizenship preparation, college/continuing education guidance, employment/career guidance, financial planning/investment information, book/film discussions or presentations, cultural performances, recreational activities, parenting skills, and computer/Internet instruction.

Internet Access

The Internet has become a major source of information and a major means of communication for adults. In the August 2000 Current Population Survey, adults 18 years and over reported using the Internet from home for the following tasks: e-mail (33 percent of adults), information searches (24 percent), checking on news, weather, or sports (20 percent), performing job-related tasks (12 percent), and school research or courses

(9 percent). Forty-two percent of households had at least one member who used the Internet at home, and 37 percent of all adults reported using the Internet at home (Newburger 2001).

Public libraries are one source of Internet access, and thus may have the potential to substantially expand access to the Internet for the adult public. Just as schools may level the playing field by giving computer and Internet access to children who do not have such access at home (Newburger 2001), libraries have the potential to do the same for adults. Thus, it is important to know the extent to which public library outlets have Internet access for the adult public.

The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) conducted a survey in spring 2000 on public library outlet connectivity to the Internet. The results of that survey indicate that 96 percent of public library outlets were connected to the Internet in some way in 2000, and 94 percent of outlets provided public access to the Internet (Bertot and McClure 2000). This is an increase from 1998, when NCLIS and the American Library Association conducted the first study on public library outlet connectivity to the Internet.[8] In 1998, 84 percent of public library outlets were connected to the Internet, and 73 percent of outlets provided public access to the Internet (NCLIS 1999). The results of the 2000 NCLIS survey also indicate that 55 percent of outlets offered Internet training services to the adult public.

This report provides information about the extent to which outlets provide access to the Internet to adults for their independent use, and perceived barriers to the outlet's ability to provide such Internet access.

[8] From 1994 through 1997, NCLIS sponsored annual studies of Internet access in public library systems (administrative entities). In 1998 and 2000, the studies of library connectivity to the Internet were conducted at the outlet level rather than the system level.

Study Methodology

The information in this report is based on a survey conducted in fall 2000 by NCES using its Fast Response Survey System. FRSS is a survey system designed to collect small amounts of issue-oriented data with minimal burden on respondents and within a relatively short timeframe.[9] The results presented in this report are based on questionnaire data for 954 public library outlets in the United States. The questionnaire responses were weighted to produce national estimates that represent all public library outlets in the United States. As defined on this questionnaire, a public library outlet is a unit (usually a building) that provides direct public library service. An outlet may be a main or central library, a branch library, or a bookmobile.

The sample for this survey consisted of 1,011 public library outlets in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, comprising 461 central/main libraries, 485 branch libraries, and 65 bookmobiles. The sample was selected from the NCES Fiscal Year 1997 Public Libraries Survey (PLS) Public Library Outlet File. The sampling frame consisted of 16,918 public library outlets, of which 8,954 were central/main library outlets, 7,120 were branch outlets, and 844 were bookmobiles or books-by-mail only services.[10]

[9] FRSS surveys are limited in scope. Therefore, this FRSS survey could not collect information about all the kinds of programs for adults in public libraries, or all the types of activities that libraries do to support these programs. This FRSS survey collected information about three topics that are areas in which libraries serve the educational needs of their communities: adult literacy programs, programs for adult lifelong learning, and Internet access for adult independent use. Libraries also support adult literacy activities in ways that are not measured in this survey, such as developing and maintaining literacy collections, building coalitions with literacy groups, and providing space to outside groups to support literacy activities. There are also other types of lifelong learning programs, such as health education/information, civic awareness and government issues, and genealogy information. The constraints of an FRSS questionnaire limited the number of such programs that could be included on this survey.

[10] During data collection on the survey, a number of sampled library outlets were found to be out of the scope of the survey, primarily because the outlet was no longer in existence. This reduced the number of library outlets in the sampling frame to an estimated 16,655. There are only 12 books-by-mail only services on the sampling frame, and none of them were sampled for this FRSS survey. See appendix A for further discussion of sampling and data collection issues.

These outlets were components of 8,967 public library systems. These public library systems are referred to as administrative entities on NCES data files, and as public libraries in NCES publications. As defined by NCES, an administrative entity is "the agency that is legally established under local or state law to provide public library service to the population of a local jurisdiction. The Administrative Entity may have a single outlet, or it may have more than one outlet" (Chute and Kroe 2001, p. 105).[11] Eighty percent of public libraries (administrative entities) consisted of one single direct service outlet in 1997 (Chute and Kroe 2000).

For this survey, library programs were defined to mean planned activities for groups or individuals that are offered by libraries to provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment. Respondents were instructed that their library outlet should be considered as offering a program if the outlet provided funding, materials, or staff to support the program, or the library system ran the program within or on behalf of the library outlet. Programs offered by the library outlet could take place in the library or at offsite locations (e.g., at a senior citizens center). Programs that used library space rented from the library or made available to outside groups by the library, but with no other involvement of the library outlet or system, were not considered offerings of the library outlet.[12]

The characteristics of public library outlets used as analysis variables in this report are as follows:

- Number of library visits per week, measured by the number of persons who entered the library outlet in a typical week (less than 300, 300 to 1,499, 1,500 or more). This information, collected on the questionnaire, provides one measure of outlet size.[13] For ease of discussion in the text of this report, outlets with less than 300 library visits per week are referred to as small outlets, those with 300 to 1,499 library visits per week are referred to as medium-sized outlets, and outlets with 1,500 or more library visits per week are referred to as large outlets.
- Metropolitan status (urban, suburban, and rural). This information was obtained from the metropolitan status variable on the NCES FY 1997 file of public library outlets. Urban libraries are located within the city limits of the central city of a Metropolitan Area. Suburban libraries are in a Metropolitan Area, but not within the central city limits, while rural libraries are not in a Metropolitan Area.

Additional information about these variables is provided in appendix A.[14] The distributions of the analysis variables are shown in figure 1.[15] Small and medium-sized outlets each constitute 37 percent of public library outlets, while large outlets constitute 26 percent of public library outlets. Fifty-five percent of public library outlets are located in rural areas, 29 percent in suburban areas, and 16 percent in urban areas.

Outlet size, as measured by the number of library visits per week, and metropolitan status are related to each other. For example, among small outlets, 76 percent are in rural areas and 5 percent are in urban areas, while 43 percent of large outlets are located in suburban areas (table 1). Among urban

[11]The definition of administrative entity is from the glossary of the report for the FY 1998 public library data.

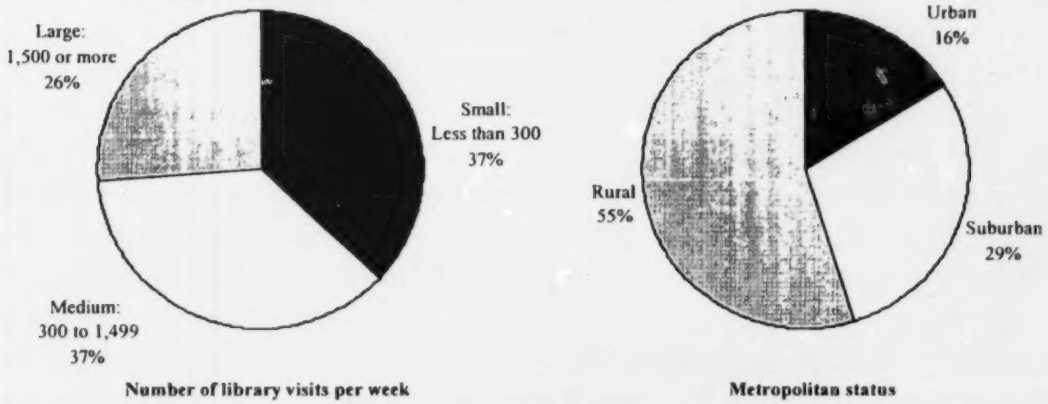
[12]A decision was made during survey development to focus on direct provision of programming, rather than including provision of space. Also see the discussion on pages 3-4 of literacy program support for public libraries.

[13]Reported number of library visits per week is used as a measure of library size because the NCES public library outlet file does not provide any information about the size of the outlet. Since outlet size is often related to the level of service provision, a proxy measure of size was created.

[14]Very few characteristics are available for analyzing outlet-level data. Characteristics such as funding, collections, and staffing are collected by NCES for library systems, and not for library outlets. Type of library outlet (central, branch, bookmobile) was not selected as an analysis variable because it is confounded with library system structure. For example, a central library can be the large main library of a multiple outlet system, or it can be a small library in a single outlet system; some library systems do not have a central library, and some have more than one central library. This reduces the likelihood that meaningful relationships will be found by type of library outlet. Outlet type was used as a stratification variable for sampling to ensure that all types of libraries were represented in the sample.

[15]These are weighted distributions based on the 954 outlets responding to this survey. Data presented in all tables and figures are weighted to produce national estimates that represent all public library outlets in the United States.

Figure 1.—Percentage distributions of public library outlets, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 1.—Percentage distribution of public library outlets in urban, suburban, and rural areas, by number of library visits per week: 2000

Number of library visits per week	Metropolitan status		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Small: Less than 300	5	19	76
Medium: 300 to 1,499	18	29	54
Large: 1,500 or more	30	43	26

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

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Table 2.—Percentage distribution of public library outlets with various numbers of library visits per week, by metropolitan status: 2000

Metropolitan status	Number of library visits per week		
	Small: Less than 300	Medium: 300 to 1,499	Large: 1,500 or more
Urban	12	40	48
Suburban	25	36	39
Rural	51	36	12

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

outlets, 12 percent are small and 48 percent are large (table 2). Rural outlets show the opposite pattern, with 51 percent being small and 12 percent being large. Because of these relationships, differences on survey items by these analysis variables often show similar patterns. That is, differences on survey items between small and large outlets also tend to be present between rural and urban outlets. Due to the relatively small sample size used in this study, it is difficult to separate the independent effects of these variables. The existence of these relationships between variables, however, should be considered in the interpretation of the data presented in this report.

All comparative statements[16] made in the text of this report have been tested for statistical significance using *t*-tests adjusted for multiple comparisons using the Bonferroni adjustment and are significant at the 0.05 level. Throughout this report, differences between numbers shown in the tables that may appear large may not be statistically significant. This is due in part to the relatively large standard errors surrounding the estimates (because of the relatively small initial sample size and the subsetting of the data based on skip patterns in the questionnaire), and the use of the Bonferroni adjustment to control for multiple comparisons. Appendix A provides a detailed discussion of the sample and survey methodology.

Organization of This Report

The chapters that follow present information about programs for adults in public library outlets in 2000, as reported by outlet staff. Specifically, chapter 2 presents information about adult literacy program offerings at public library outlets, including the types of literacy programs offered and the groups for which adult literacy programs are specifically offered. Information is also provided about reasons library outlets do not offer adult literacy programs. Chapter 3 reports about the types of adult lifelong learning programs offered by public library outlets, the groups for which such programs are specifically offered, and barriers to providing lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities. Chapter 4 provides information about the extent of Internet access for adults in public library outlets and barriers to providing Internet access. The concluding chapter summarizes the findings of this study. Technical information, including a detailed study methodology discussion (appendix A) and tables of standard errors for all data presented in this report (appendix B), are included as technical appendices to the report. The questionnaire is presented in appendix C.

[16] An example of a comparative statement is outlets in urban areas offered literacy programs more often than outlets in rural areas (26 percent compared with 15 percent).

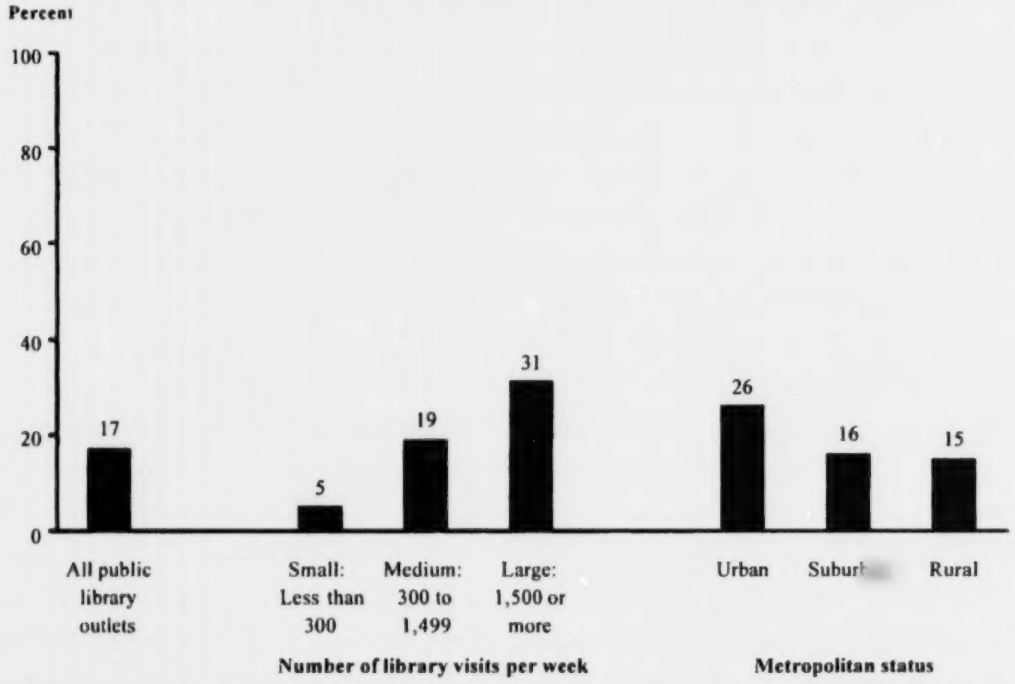
2. PROGRAMS FOR ADULT LITERACY

Public libraries are one source of adult literacy programs within communities (Kroe, Garner, and Sheckells 2001).[17] Literacy programming includes direct literacy instruction, as well as activities such as providing funding, materials, or staff to support the literacy program of another literacy provider. Literacy programs included in this study may be provided within library outlets by the individual library outlets themselves, by the library systems to which the outlets belong, or by outside organizations in collaboration with the library outlet. This chapter provides information about adult literacy program offerings supported by public library outlets, including the types of literacy programs offered and the groups for which adult literacy programs are specifically offered. Reasons library outlets do not offer adult literacy programs are also discussed.

Adult Literacy Program Offerings

Adult literacy programs, including adult basic literacy skills, pre-GED, GED, English as a second language, and family literacy, were offered by 17 percent of public library outlets during the 12 months prior to the survey (figure 2). For this

Figure 2.—Percent of public library outlets that offered adult literacy programs during the last 12 months, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

[17]Other sources for adult literacy programs include workplace literacy programs, school districts, community colleges, social service agencies, and religious and community organizations.

survey, a library outlet was considered to offer an adult literacy program if the outlet provided funding, instructional materials, or staff to support the literacy program, or if the library system ran the literacy program within or on behalf of the individual library outlet. Thus, adult literacy programs that took place within the library outlet but were run by other agencies or organizations (such as the local school district or the Literacy Volunteers of America) with no other involvement of the library outlet or system were not considered offerings of the library outlet or system.

The likelihood of offering adult literacy programs was related to outlet size, as measured by the number of persons who entered the library outlet in a typical week (referred to in this report as the number of library visits per week). While 5 percent of small outlets offered adult literacy programs, 19 percent of medium-sized outlets and 31 percent of large outlets had such offerings (figure 2). The likelihood of offering adult literacy programs was also related to metropolitan status, with outlets in urban areas offering literacy programs more often than outlets in rural areas (26 percent compared with 15 percent). Adult literacy programs were offered by 16 percent of outlets in suburban areas.[18]

The 17 percent of library outlets that offered adult literacy programs were asked about the types of adult literacy programs that were offered during the 12 months prior to the survey. Programs in adult basic literacy skills (defined as skills at the fourth-grade level and below) were offered by 63 percent of outlets that offered literacy programs (table 3). The other types of adult literacy programs (pre-GED, defined as skills from the fifth-grade through the eighth-grade levels; GED, defined as skills from the ninth-grade level through high school equivalency; English as a second language; and family literacy) were offered by 42 to 48 percent of outlets that offered literacy programs.[19]

Table 3.—Percent of public library outlets that offered any adult literacy programs during the last 12 months, and of those, the percent that offered specific types: 2000

Adult literacy programs	Percent
Offered any adult literacy programs	17
Type of adult literacy program offered*	
Adult basic literacy skills (skills at 4th grade level and below)	63
Pre-GED (skills from 5th through 8th grade levels)	42
GED (skills from 9th grade through high school equivalency)	45
English as a second language (ESL)	48
Family literacy	46

*Based on library outlets that offered any adult literacy programs.

NOTE: Percentages for the type of program offered sum to more than 100 because library outlets could offer more than one type of adult literacy program.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Library outlets that offered adult literacy programs were asked whether they offered any adult literacy programs specifically for certain groups during the 12 months prior to the survey (see table 4). About half of outlets offering literacy programs offered such programs specifically for adults who were limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants (50 percent) or for parents (48 percent). Adult literacy programs specifically for high school dropouts were offered by 40 percent of outlets offering literacy programs. About a quarter (26 percent) of outlets with adult literacy programs offered programs specifically for adults with learning disabilities, and 11 percent offered

[18]Throughout this report, the relatively large standard errors surrounding the estimates (because of the small sample size) and the use of the Bonferroni adjustment to control for multiple comparisons make it more likely that differences that may appear large may not be statistically significant. For example, the difference between urban and suburban outlets in offering adult literacy programs (26 percent versus 16 percent) is not statistically significant, due at least partly to the relatively large standard errors (3.3 and 2.3, respectively), and a Bonferroni-adjusted critical *t* value of 2.40 rather than the unadjusted critical *t* value of 1.96.

[19]Because so few library outlets offered adult literacy programs, other information about the adult literacy programs is not presented by library outlet characteristics.

programs specifically for adults with hearing impairments.[20]

Table 4.—Percent of public library outlets that offered any adult literacy programs during the last 12 months, and of those, the percent that offered programs specifically for certain groups: 2000

Adult literacy programs	Percent
Offered any adult literacy programs	17
Offered adult literacy programs specifically for: *	
Limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants	50
Parents	48
High school dropouts	40
Adults with learning disabilities	26
Adults with hearing impairments	11

*Based on library outlets that offered any adult literacy programs.

NOTE: Percentages for the groups sum to more than 100 because library outlets could offer adult literacy programs for more than one group.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

About a quarter (27 percent) of library outlets that offered adult literacy programs offered such programs at offsite locations during the 12 months prior to the survey (not shown in tables in text).[21] Computers were used as a hands-on learning tool for adult literacy programs during the 12 months prior to the survey by 52 percent of outlets that offered adult literacy programs (not shown in tables in text).

Reasons Adult Literacy Programs Are Not Offered

The 83 percent of library outlets that did not offer adult literacy programs during the 12 months prior to the survey were asked to indicate how important specific reasons were in the outlet's decision *not* to offer these programs (see table 5). The reason most frequently indicated as very important in the outlet's decision not to offer adult literacy programs was that the outlet did not have the staff or resources to offer the programs (77 percent). About half of the outlets (53 percent) indicated that the presence of other groups or educational

Table 5.—Among public library outlets that did not offer adult literacy programs, percentage distribution of the importance of specific reasons in the outlet's decision not to offer adult literacy programs: 2000

Reason	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
This outlet does not have the staff or resources to offer adult literacy programs	9	14	77
Other groups or educational institutions in the community (including other library outlets) offer adult literacy programs	24	22	53
The programming in this outlet emphasizes other groups (e.g., children, senior citizens)	36	28	37
The community served by this outlet does not have a strong need for adult literacy programs	48	32	20

NOTE: Percentages are based on the 83 percent of library outlets that did not offer any adult literacy programs. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

[20] Although literacy programs may not be offered specifically for certain groups, there may also be components of general adult literacy programs that would address their needs, such as screening for learning disabilities, provision of special equipment for adults with hearing impairments, or staff with foreign language skills.

[21] Estimates and standard errors for all data indicated as "not shown in tables in text" are presented in table 13 in appendix B.

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institutions in the community (including other library outlets) that offer adult literacy programs was very important in their decision not to offer such programs. An emphasis on other groups (e.g., children, senior citizens) in the outlet's programming was indicated as very important by 37 percent of the outlets. The reason least often indicated as very important in the outlet's decision not to offer adult literacy programs was that the community served by the outlet does not have a strong need for adult literacy programs (20 percent); almost half of the outlets (48 percent) indicated that this reason was not important in their decision.

The likelihood that outlets would view specific reasons as being very important in their decision not to offer adult literacy programs showed some variation by outlet characteristics (see table 6). Large outlets were less likely than medium-sized outlets to indicate that lack of staff or resources was very important in their decision not to offer adult literacy programs (68 percent compared with 80 percent). The presence of other groups or educational institutions in the community that offer adult literacy programs was cited as very important more often by large outlets than by medium-sized or small outlets (71 percent compared with 52 and 45 percent, respectively); this reason was cited as very important less often by rural outlets than by suburban or urban outlets (47 percent versus 59 and 64 percent, respectively). Small outlets were more likely than large outlets to indicate as a very important reason for not offering adult literacy programs that the community served by the outlet did not have a strong need for adult literacy programs (24 percent compared with 14 percent).

Table 6.—Percent of public library outlets that did not offer adult literacy programs, and the percent without adult literacy programs indicating that specific reasons were very important in the outlet's decision, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Did not offer adult literacy programs	Reasons for not offering adult literacy programs*			
		This outlet does not have the staff or resources to offer adult literacy programs	Other groups or educational institutions in the community offer adult literacy programs	The programming in this outlet emphasizes other groups	The community served by this outlet does not have a strong need for adult literacy programs
All public library outlets	83	77	53	37	20
Number of library visits per week					
Small: Less than 300	95	79	45	35	24
Medium: 300 to 1,499	81	80	52	39	20
Large: 1,500 or more	69	68	71	37	14
Metropolitan status					
Urban	74	69	64	43	15
Suburban	84	77	59	35	22
Rural	85	79	47	35	21

*Based on library outlets that did not offer any adult literacy programs.

NOTE: Percentages for the reasons for not offering adult literacy programs sum to more than 100 because library outlets could indicate that more than one reason was very important.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

3. PROGRAMS FOR ADULT LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong learning is one of the service responses that public library outlets may provide to meet the needs of their communities. According to the PLA, a library that provides a lifelong learning service response "helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities" (Nelson 2001, p. 65). Lifelong learning services for adults encompass many kinds of activities and programs to meet the cultural, recreational, and educational needs of the adults served by the library outlet. This chapter provides information about the types of adult lifelong learning programs offered by public library outlets, groups for which such programs are specifically offered, and barriers to providing lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities.

Adult Lifelong Learning Programs

The survey asked all the library outlets whether they offered nine types of adult lifelong learning programs during the 12 months prior to the survey. For this survey, the library outlet was considered as offering a program if the outlet provided funding, materials, or staff to support the program, or the library system ran the program within or on behalf of the library outlet. Programs that used library space rented from the library or made available to outside groups by the library, but with no other involvement of the library outlet or system, were not considered offerings of the library outlet.

Computer/Internet instruction, offered by 56 percent of all public library outlets, was the most frequently offered type of adult lifelong learning program (table 7). Forty-three percent of outlets

Table 7.—Percent of public library outlets that offered specific types of adult lifelong learning programs during the last 12 months, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Computer/ Internet instruction	Book/film discussions or presentations	Cultural performances	Recreational activities (e.g., crafts, travel, hobbies)	Parenting skills	Financial planning/ investment information	Employment/ career guidance	College/ continuing education guidance	Citizenship preparation
All public library outlets	56	43	41	39	20	18	17	15	5
Number of library visits per week									
Small: Less than 300	36	22	11	24	6	4	8	9	5
Medium: 300 to 1,499	59	45	48	40	22	19	20	18	4
Large: 1,500 or more	77	69	71	59	38	38	24	18	5
Metropolitan status									
Urban	68	56	60	52	28	30	31	21	7
Suburban	59	50	51	50	24	26	18	14	6
Rural	49	34	28	29	15	11	12	13	3

NOTE: Percentages sum to more than 100 because library outlets could offer more than one type of adult lifelong learning program.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

offered book/film discussions or presentations, 41 percent offered cultural performances, and 39 percent offered recreational activities such as crafts, travel, or hobbies. Programs on parenting skills were offered by 20 percent of outlets, financial planning/investment information programs were offered by 18 percent of outlets, employment/career guidance programs by 17 percent of outlets, and college/continuing education guidance programs by 15 percent of outlets. Programs for citizenship preparation were offered by 5 percent of the outlets.

The likelihood of offering most types of adult lifelong learning programs was related to outlet size, as measured by the number of library visits per week. Except for citizenship preparation programs, which did not vary significantly by outlet size, large and medium-sized outlets were more likely to offer all the types of adult lifelong learning programs than were small outlets (table 7). Large outlets were also more likely than medium-sized outlets to offer most of the programs. The exceptions to this pattern were employment/career guidance and college/continuing education guidance. The likelihood of offering various types of adult lifelong learning programs was also related to metropolitan status. Except for citizenship preparation and college/continuing education guidance programs, outlets in urban areas were more likely than outlets in rural areas to offer all the types of adult lifelong learning programs.[22] The pattern for suburban outlets was less clear, although they tended to resemble urban outlets in many of their program offerings.

All library outlets were asked whether they offered any adult lifelong learning programs *specifically* for certain groups during the 12 months prior to the survey (see table 8). About a quarter of the outlets offered programs specifically for senior citizens or for parents (24 percent for each). Programs were offered specifically for adults who

Table 8.—Percent of public library outlets that offered adult lifelong learning programs specifically for certain groups during the last 12 months, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Senior citizens	Parents	Limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants	Adults with physical disabilities	Adults with learning disabilities
All public library outlets	24	24	9	6	5
Number of library visits per week					
Small: Less than 300	12	10	1	4	2
Medium: 300 to 1,499	25	27	11	7	6
Large: 1,500 or more	38	38	19	9	6
Metropolitan status					
Urban	35	32	20	7	8
Suburban	29	31	11	5	3
Rural	18	17	5	6	5

NOTE: Percentages may sum to more than 100 because library outlets could offer lifelong learning programs for more than one group.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

[22]This is an example of differences on survey items by outlet size and metropolitan status tending to show similar patterns, as discussed in chapter 1. That is, the differences on survey items between small and large outlets also tend to be present between rural and urban outlets.

are limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants by 9 percent of outlets, for adults with physical disabilities by 6 percent of outlets, and for adults with learning disabilities by 5 percent of outlets. Large outlets were more likely than medium-sized outlets, which in turn were more likely than small outlets to offer adult lifelong learning programs specifically for senior citizens, parents, and adults who are limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants. Outlets in urban and suburban areas were more likely than outlets in rural areas to offer programs for these same groups. In addition, urban outlets were more likely than suburban outlets to offer programs for adults who are limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants.

Barriers to Offering Programs for Adults with Disabilities

All library outlets were asked to what extent certain factors were barriers to the outlet's offering lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities. Most outlets did not perceive insufficient accessibility to library facilities for the disabled to be a barrier to offering such programs, with 70 percent of outlets indicating it was not a barrier (table 9). Insufficient accessibility was perceived to be a major barrier by 12 percent of outlets. The remaining factors (lack of staff training in working with adults with disabilities, lack of assistive/

Table 9.—Percentage distribution of the extent to which public library outlets report specific factors as barriers to the outlet's offering lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities: 2000

Factor	Not a barrier	Minor barrier	Moderate barrier	Major barrier
Lack of staff training in working with adults with disabilities	17	20	24	39
Lack of assistive/adaptive devices for adults with disabilities	22	18	22	38
Insufficient library materials for the blind or physically disabled	24	19	23	33
Insufficient accessibility to library facilities for the disabled	70	9	8	12

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

adaptive devices for adults with disabilities, and insufficient library materials for the blind or physically disabled) were rated as not a barrier by 17 to 24 percent of outlets, and as a major barrier by 33 to 39 percent of outlets. With the exception of insufficient accessibility to library facilities for the disabled, the factors were considered to be a moderate or major barrier by a majority of the outlets.

Small outlets were more likely than large outlets to perceive all the factors as major barriers to offering programs for adults with disabilities (table 10). With one exception, perceptions of the factors as a major barrier did not differ significantly by metropolitan status. The exception is that rural outlets were more likely than urban outlets to perceive a lack of staff training in working with adults with disabilities as a major barrier (45 percent versus 32 percent).

Table 10.—Percent of public library outlets reporting that specific factors are major barriers to the outlet offering lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Lack of staff training in working with adults with disabilities	Lack of assistive/ adaptive devices for adults with disabilities	Insufficient library materials for the blind or physically disabled	Insufficient accessibility to library facilities for the disabled
All public library outlets	39	38	33	12
Number of library visits per week				
Small: Less than 300	47	51	41	21
Medium: 300 to 1,499	36	33	34	10
Large: 1,500 or more	33	28	22	5
Metropolitan status				
Urban	32	35	32	14
Suburban	34	36	30	11
Rural	45	41	35	13

NOTE: Percentages sum to more than 100 because library outlets could report that more than one factor was a major barrier.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

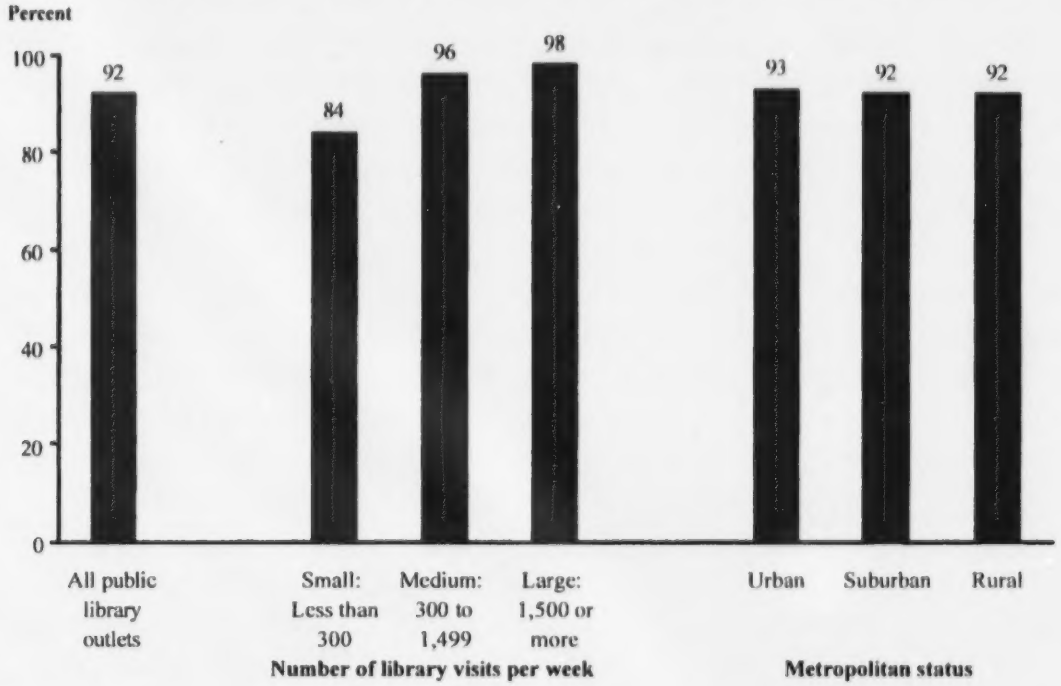
4. INTERNET ACCESS

The Internet has become a major tool for communication and for education and job-related tasks. Public libraries are one of the providers of Internet access to the public. This chapter provides information about the extent to which public library outlets provide access to the Internet to adults for their independent use, and barriers to providing such access.

Extent of Internet Access

Ninety-two percent of public library outlets reported providing Internet access to adults for their independent use (figure 3). Small outlets were less likely to provide Internet access than were medium-sized or large outlets (84 percent compared with 96 and 98 percent, respectively). No differences were observed by metropolitan status.

Figure 3.—Percent of public library outlets that provide Internet access to adults for their independent use, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Barriers to Providing Internet Access

All library outlets were asked to what extent the following factors were barriers to providing Internet access to adults for their independent use: insufficient space for computers, insufficient number of computers with Internet access, insufficient number of telecommunications lines for Internet access, lack of library staff to assist Internet users, and lack of specialized training among library staff. Across all public library outlets, these factors were generally not perceived as being major barriers to providing Internet access; the percentage of outlets rating each factor as a major barrier ranged from 9 percent for lack of specialized training among library staff to 29 percent for insufficient space for computers (table 11). However, there were differences in perceived barriers between the library outlets that provided Internet access and those that did not. All of the factors were more likely to be identified as major barriers by library outlets that did not provide Internet access than by library outlets that did provide Internet access. For example, 71 percent of outlets not providing Internet access reported that insufficient space for computers was a major barrier, compared with 25 percent of library outlets providing Internet access.

Table 11.—Percentage distribution of the extent to which public library outlets report specific factors as barriers to the outlet's ability to provide access to the Internet to adults for their independent use, by whether the outlet provides Internet access: 2000

Factor, by whether the outlet provides Internet access	Not a barrier	Minor barrier	Moderate barrier	Major barrier
Insufficient space for computers				
All public library outlets	40	14	17	29
Outlets providing Internet access[1]	42	15	18	25
Outlets not providing Internet access[2]	21	[3]2	[3]6	71
Insufficient number of computers with Internet access				
All public library outlets	43	18	19	20
Outlets providing Internet access[1]	45	19	20	16
Outlets not providing Internet access[2]	24	[3]2	[3]6	68
Insufficient number of telecommunications lines for Internet access				
All public library outlets	59	11	11	19
Outlets providing Internet access[1]	63	12	11	15
Outlets not providing Internet access[2]	16	[3]6	[3]10	67
Lack of library staff to assist Internet users				
All public library outlets	52	19	17	12
Outlets providing Internet access[1]	53	20	17	9
Outlets not providing Internet access[2]	37	9	8	46
Lack of specialized training among library staff				
All public library outlets	48	26	18	9
Outlets providing Internet access[1]	48	26	19	7
Outlets not providing Internet access[2]	46	18	8	28

[1]Based on the 92 percent of public library outlets that provide Internet access to adults for their independent use.

[2] Based on the 8 percent of public library outlets that do not provide Internet access to adults for their independent use.

[3]Coefficient of variation greater than 50 percent.

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

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In addition, there were some differences by library outlet characteristics in the extent to which specific factors were perceived as major barriers to providing Internet access to adults for their independent use. For four out of the five factors, small outlets were more likely than medium-sized or large outlets to perceive the factor as a major barrier to providing Internet access (table 12). The fifth factor, lack of specialized training among library staff, was more likely to be perceived as a major barrier by small outlets than by large outlets. The only difference by metropolitan status was that outlets in rural areas were more likely than outlets in suburban or urban areas to perceive lack of specialized training among library staff as a major barrier.

Table 12.—Percent of public library outlets reporting that specific factors are major barriers to the outlet's ability to provide access to the Internet to adults for their independent use, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Insufficient space for computers	Insufficient number of computers with Internet access	Insufficient number of telecommunications lines for Internet access	Lack of library staff to assist Internet users	Lack of specialized training among library staff
All public library outlets	29	20	19	12	9
Number of library visits per week					
Small: Less than 300	36	29	33	18	13
Medium: 300 to 1,499	25	14	13	8	7
Large: 1,500 or more	24	15	7	8	5
Metropolitan status					
Urban	26	21	14	10	5
Suburban	30	20	19	11	5
Rural	29	20	20	13	12

NOTE: Percentages may sum to more than 100 because library outlets could report that more than one factor was a major barrier.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

5. SUMMARY

Public libraries play many and varied roles within their communities. Depending on the type of community in which the library is located, the library may emphasize programs and other types of services for particular segments of the population (e.g., children, or those with limited English or reading skills), or may emphasize particular types of services (e.g., collections of various kinds, or recreational and cultural activities). This report provides nationally representative data about three areas of interest for adult programming in public library outlets: adult literacy programs, programs for adult lifelong learning, and Internet access for adult independent use. The information is based on a survey conducted in fall 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics using its Fast Response Survey System. The questionnaire responses were weighted to produce national estimates that represent all public library outlets in the United States. As defined on this questionnaire, a public library outlet is a unit (usually a building) that provides direct public library service. An outlet may be a main or central library, a branch library, or a bookmobile.

For this survey, library programs were defined to mean planned activities for groups or individuals that are offered by libraries to provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment. Respondents were instructed that their library outlet should be considered as offering a program if the outlet provided funding, materials, or staff to support the program, or the library system ran the program within or on behalf of the library outlet. Programs offered by the library outlet could take place in the library or at off-site locations (e.g., at a senior citizens center). Programs that used library space rented from the library or made available to outside groups by the library, but with no other involvement of the library outlet or system, were not considered offerings of the library outlet.

Adult Literacy Programs

Seventeen percent of public library outlets offered adult literacy programs, including adult basic literacy skills, pre-GED, GED, English as a second language, and family literacy, during the 12 months prior to the survey. The likelihood of offering adult literacy programs was related to outlet size, as measured by the number of persons who entered the library outlet in a typical week (referred to in this report as the number of library visits per week). While 5 percent of small outlets offered adult literacy programs, 19 percent of medium-sized outlets and 31 percent of large outlets offered literacy programs. Urban outlets were more likely to offer adult literacy programs than were outlets in rural areas (26 percent compared with 15 percent).

Programs in adult basic literacy skills (defined as skills at the fourth-grade level and below) were offered by 63 percent of outlets that offered adult literacy programs. Pre-GED, GED, English as a second language, and family literacy were offered by 42 to 48 percent of the outlets that offered adult literacy programs.

About half of outlets offering adult literacy programs offered such programs specifically for adults who were limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants (50 percent) or for parents (48 percent). Adult literacy programs specifically for high school dropouts were offered by 40 percent of outlets offering adult literacy programs. About a quarter (26 percent) of outlets with adult literacy programs offered programs specifically for adults with learning disabilities, and 11 percent offered programs specifically for adults with hearing impairments.

Outlets that did not offer adult literacy programs during the 12 months prior to the survey were asked to indicate how important various reasons were in the outlet's decision *not* to offer such programs. Not having the staff or resources to

offer adult literacy programs was the reason most frequently cited as very important in the outlet's decision not to offer adult literacy programs (77 percent). The presence of other groups or educational institutions in the community (including other library outlets) that offer adult literacy programs was very important in their decision not to offer such programs for 53 percent of the outlets. An emphasis on other groups (e.g., children, senior citizens) in the outlet's programming was indicated as very important by 37 percent of outlets. The reason least often indicated as very important in the outlet's decision not to offer adult literacy programs was that the community served by the outlet does not have a strong need for adult literacy programs (20 percent); almost half of the outlets (48 percent) indicated that this reason was not important in their decision.

Lifelong Learning Programs

The most frequently offered type of adult lifelong learning program was computer/Internet instruction, offered by 56 percent of all public library outlets. Forty-three percent of outlets offered book/film discussions or presentations, 41 percent offered cultural performances, and 39 percent offered recreational activities such as crafts, travel, or hobbies. Programs on parenting skills were offered by 20 percent of outlets, financial planning/investment information programs were offered by 18 percent of outlets, employment/career guidance programs by 17 percent of outlets, and college/continuing education guidance programs by 15 percent of outlets. Programs for citizenship preparation were offered by 5 percent of the outlets. Except for citizenship preparation programs, which did not vary significantly by outlet size, large and medium-sized outlets were more likely than small outlets to offer all the types of adult lifelong learning programs. Large outlets were also more likely than medium-sized outlets to offer most of the programs, with the exception of employment/career guidance, and college/continuing education guidance programs. Looking at variation by metropolitan status, urban outlets were more likely than rural outlets to offer all the types of adult lifelong learning programs except citizenship preparation and college/continuing education guidance programs.

About a quarter of all outlets offered adult lifelong learning programs specifically for senior citizens or for parents (24 percent for each). Programs were offered specifically for adults who are limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants by 9 percent of outlets, for adults with physical disabilities by 6 percent of outlets, and for adults with learning disabilities by 5 percent of outlets.

All library outlets were asked to what extent certain factors were barriers to the outlet's offering lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities. Insufficient accessibility to library facilities for the disabled was perceived as a major barrier by 12 percent of outlets, and as not a barrier by 70 percent of outlets. Lack of staff training in working with adults with disabilities and lack of assistive/adaptive devices for adults with disabilities were perceived as major barriers by 39 and 38 percent of the outlets, respectively. About a third of the outlets indicated that insufficient library materials for the blind or physically disabled was a major barrier to offering programs specifically for adults with disabilities.

Internet Access

Most public library outlets (92 percent) reported providing Internet access to adults for their independent use. Small outlets were less likely to provide Internet access than were medium-sized or large outlets (84 percent compared with 96 and 98 percent, respectively). No differences were observed by metropolitan status.

Library outlets were asked to what extent the following factors were barriers to providing Internet access to adults for their independent use: insufficient space for computers, insufficient number of computers with Internet access, insufficient number of telecommunications lines for Internet access, lack of library staff to assist Internet users, and lack of specialized training among library staff. Across all public library

outlets, these factors were generally not perceived as being major barriers to providing Internet access; the percentage of outlets rating each factor as a major barrier ranged from 9 percent for lack of specialized training among library staff to 29 percent for insufficient space for computers. However, there were differences in perceived barriers between the library outlets that provided Internet access and those that did not. All of the factors were more likely to be identified as major barriers by outlets that did not provide Internet access than by outlets that did provide Internet access.

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Appendix A

Survey Methodology

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Fast Response Survey System

The Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) was established in 1975 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education. FRSS is designed to collect small amounts of issue-oriented data with minimal burden on respondents and within a relatively short timeframe. Surveys are generally limited to three pages of questions, with a response burden of about 30 minutes per respondent. Sample sizes are relatively small (usually about 1,000 to 1,500 respondents per survey) so that data collection can be completed quickly. Data are weighted to produce national estimates of the sampled education sector. The sample size permits limited breakouts by classification variables. However, as the number of categories within the classification variables increases, the sample size within categories decreases, which results in larger sampling errors for the breakouts by classification variables. FRSS collects data from state education agencies, local education agencies, public and private elementary and secondary schools, public school teachers, and public libraries.

Sample Selection

The sample for the FRSS survey on programs for adults in public library outlets consisted of 1,011 public library outlets in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The sample was selected from the NCES Fiscal Year 1997 Public Libraries Survey (PLS) Public Library Outlet File. The sampling frame consisted of 16,918 public library outlets, of which 8,954 were central/main library outlets, 7,120 were branch outlets, and 844 were bookmobiles or books-by-mail only services.[23] The public library outlet sampling frame was stratified by type of outlet (central/main, branch, bookmobile/books-by-mail), metropolitan status (urban, suburban, rural), and size of the library outlet based on estimated size of the population served by the outlet (less than 5,000, 5,000 to 9,999, 10,000 to 24,999, 25,000 to 99,999, 100,000 to 249,999, 250,000 or more), for a total of 54 primary strata. Within the primary strata, outlets were also sorted by geographic region (Northeast, Southeast, Central, West) to induce implicit geographic stratification. The allocation of the total sample to a particular stratum was made in proportion to the aggregate square root of the estimated size of the population served within the stratum. Libraries were then selected systematically and with equal probabilities at rates that depended on the allocation indicated above. In effect, with the given sample allocation, libraries were selected with probabilities approximately proportionate to the square root of the population size. After the stratum sample sizes were determined, a sample of 1,011 outlets was selected systematically from the sorted file using independent random starts within each stratum. The sample contained 461 central/main libraries, 485 branch libraries, and 65 bookmobiles.

Respondent and Response Rates

Questionnaires and cover letters were mailed to the library directors in the sampled library outlets in mid-October 2000. Library outlets rather than administrative entities were sampled because the survey was seeking information about what individual outlets were doing to provide adult programming in selected areas. In addition, past experience with library surveys indicated that outlets are better sources for questions about services to library users, whereas administrative entities are better sources for policy questions. The cover letter indicated that the survey should be completed by the person who was most knowledgeable about programs for adults in that individual library outlet. The respondent information section on the front of the questionnaire indicated that the library director completed the questionnaire at 75 percent of the outlets, the assistant director completed it at 15

[23] During data collection on the survey, a number of sampled library outlets were found to be out of the scope of the survey, primarily because the outlet was no longer in existence. This reduced the number of library outlets in the sampling frame to an estimated 16,655. There are only 12 books-by-mail only services on the sampling frame, and none of them were sampled for this FRSS survey.

percent of the outlets, other personnel completed it at 8 percent of the outlets, and the title of the respondent was not known at 2 percent of the outlets. Telephone follow up was conducted from November 2000 through mid-January 2001 with outlets that did not respond to the initial questionnaire mailing. Of the 1,011 outlets selected for the sample, 27 were found to be out of the scope of the survey, primarily because the outlet was no longer in existence. This left a total of 984 eligible outlets in the sample. Completed questionnaires were received for 954 outlets, or 97 percent of the eligible outlets. The weighted response rate was also 97 percent. Weighted item nonresponse rates for individual questionnaire items ranged from 0 percent to 1 percent. Imputation for item nonresponse was not implemented.

Sampling and Nonsampling Errors

The responses were weighted to produce national estimates (see table A-1). The weights were designed to adjust for the variable probabilities of selection and differential nonresponse. The findings in this report are estimates based on the sample selected and, consequently, are subject to sampling variability.

The survey estimates are also subject to nonsampling errors that can arise because of nonobservation (nonresponse or noncoverage) errors, errors of reporting, and errors made in data collection. These errors can sometimes bias the data. Nonsampling errors may include such problems as misrecording of responses; incorrect editing, coding, and data entry; differences related to the particular time the survey was conducted; or errors in data preparation. While general sampling theory can be used in part to determine how to estimate the sampling variability of a statistic, nonsampling errors are not easy to measure and, for measurement purposes, usually require that an experiment be conducted as part of the data collection procedures or that data external to the study be used.

Table A-1.—Number and percentage distribution of public library outlets in the study, and the estimated number and percentage distribution in the nation, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Respondent sample		National estimate*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All public library outlets	954	100	16,655	100
Number of library visits per week				
Small: Less than 300	227	24	6,135	37
Medium: 300 to 1,499	344	36	6,101	37
Large: 1,500 or more	378	40	4,353	26
Metropolitan status				
Urban	285	30	2,650	16
Suburban	279	30	4,795	29
Rural	373	40	8,964	55

*Data presented in all tables are weighted to produce national estimates.

NOTE: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding or missing data. There were small amounts of missing data for number of library visits per week (0.5 percent unweighted; 0.4 percent weighted) and metropolitan status (1.8 percent unweighted; 1.5 percent weighted).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

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To minimize the potential for nonsampling errors, the questionnaire was pretested several times with respondents like those who completed the survey. During the design of the survey and the survey pretest, an effort was made to check for consistency of interpretation of questions and to eliminate ambiguous items. In addition, NCES convened a meeting with practitioners in the field for advice on the questionnaire design and the appropriate respondent. The questionnaire and instructions were also extensively reviewed by NCES. The survey pretests and the various reviews during survey development indicated that the outlet was the appropriate sampling and data collection level for this survey, and that outlet staff were knowledgeable respondents about adult programming within their individual library outlet. Manual and machine editing of the questionnaire responses was conducted to check the data for accuracy and consistency. Cases with missing or inconsistent items were recontacted by telephone. Data were keyed with 100 percent verification.

Variances

The standard error is a measure of the variability of estimates due to sampling. It indicates the variability of a sample estimate that would be obtained from all possible samples of a given design and size. Standard errors are used as a measure of the precision expected from a particular sample. If all possible samples were surveyed under similar conditions, intervals of 1.96 standard errors below to 1.96 standard errors above a particular statistic would include the true population parameter being estimated in about 95 percent of the samples. This is a 95 percent confidence interval. For example, the estimated percentage of outlets offering adult literacy programs is 17.0 percent, and the estimated standard error is 1.3 percent. The 95 percent confidence interval for the statistic extends from [17.0 – (1.3 times 1.96)] to [17.0 + (1.3 times 1.96)], or from 14.5 to 19.5 percent. Tables of standard errors for each table and figure in the report are provided in appendix B.

Estimates of standard errors were computed using a technique known as jackknife replication. As with any replication method, jackknife replication involves constructing a number of subsamples (replicates) from the full sample and computing the statistic of interest for each replicate. The mean square error of the replicate estimates around the full sample estimate provides an estimate of the variances of the statistics. To construct the replications, 50 stratified subsamples of the full sample were created and then dropped one at a time to define 50 jackknife replicates. A computer program (WesVar) was used to calculate the estimates of standard errors. WesVar is a stand-alone Windows application that computes sampling errors for a wide variety of statistics (totals, percents, ratios, log-odds ratios, general functions of estimates in tables, linear regression parameters, and logistic regression parameters).

The test statistics used in the analysis were calculated using the jackknife variances and thus appropriately reflected the complex nature of the sample design. In addition, Bonferroni adjustments were made to control for multiple comparisons where appropriate (see Miller 1966, pp. 67-70). Bonferroni adjustments correct for the fact that a number of comparisons (g) are being made simultaneously. The adjustment is made by dividing the 0.05 significance level by g comparisons, effectively increasing the critical value necessary for a difference to be statistically different. This means that comparisons that would have been significant with an unadjusted critical t value of 1.96 may not be significant with the Bonferroni-adjusted critical t value. For example, the Bonferroni-adjusted critical t value for comparisons between any two of the three categories of metropolitan status is 2.40, rather than 1.96. This means that there must be a larger difference between the estimates being compared for there to be a statistically significant difference when the Bonferroni adjustment is applied than when it is not used.

Definitions of Analysis Variables

Number of library visits per week—number of persons who entered the library outlet in a typical week during spring 2000, based on responses to question 1 on the survey questionnaire. This provides one measure of outlet size.

> **Less than 300 library visits per week:** referred to in the report as small outlets.
>
> **300 to 1,499 library visits per week:** referred to in the report as medium-sized outlets.
>
> **1,500 or more library visits per week:** referred to in the report as large outlets.

Metropolitan status—from the metropolitan status variable (C_MSA) on the NCES Fiscal Year 1997 Public Libraries Survey (PLS) Public Library Outlet File.

> **Urban:** within the city limits of the central city of a Metropolitan Area (referred to in the NCES data file documentation as Central City).
>
> **Suburban:** Metropolitan Area, but not within Central City limits.
>
> **Rural:** not in a Metropolitan Area.

Background Information

The survey was performed under contract with Westat, using the Fast Response Survey System. Westat's Project Director was Elizabeth Farris, and the Survey Manager was Laurie Lewis. Bernie Greene was the NCES Project Officer. The data were requested by three groups within the U.S. Department of Education: the Elementary, Secondary, and Library Studies Division at NCES, represented by Adrienne Chute; the National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning of the Office of Educational Research and Development, represented by Barbara Humes; and the National Library of Education, represented by Christina Dunn.

This report was reviewed by the following individuals:

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- Carolyn Ashcraft, Arkansas State Library
- Norman Brandt, National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning, U.S. Department of Education
- Stephanie Cronen, American Institutes for Research, Education Statistics Services Institute
- Lawrence Lanahan, American Institutes for Research, Education Statistics Services Institute
- Carolyn Lee, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education
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For more information about the Fast Response Survey System or the FRSS survey on programs for adults in public library outlets, contact Bernie Greene, Early Childhood, International, and Crosscutting Studies Division, National Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, telephone (202) 502-7348, e-mail: Bernard.Greene@ed.gov

More information and publications about public libraries in the United States, based on information collected by the NCES Library Statistics Program, is available on the NCES World Wide Web page: http://nces.ed.gov/

Appendix B

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13	Standard errors for the figures and for data not shown in tables: 2000	B-17

Table 1a.—Standard errors of the percentage distribution of public library outlets in urban, suburban, and rural areas, by number of library visits per week: 2000

Number of library visits per week	Metropolitan status		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Small: Less than 300	1.3	1.8	1.9
Medium: 300 to 1,499	1.5	2.1	2.1
Large: 1,500 or more	1.9	2.2	1.9

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 2a.—Standard errors of the percentage distribution of public library outlets with various numbers of library visits per week, by metropolitan status: 2000

Metropolitan status	Number of library visits per week		
	Small: Less than 300	Medium: 300 to 1,499	Large: 1,500 or more
Urban	2.7	3.4	3.0
Suburban	2.3	3.1	2.5
Rural	2.6	2.7	1.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 3a.—Standard error of the percent of public library outlets that offered any adult literacy programs during the last 12 months, and of those, standard errors of the percent that offered specific types: 2000

Adult literacy programs	Percent
Offered any adult literacy programs	1.3
Type of adult literacy program offered	
Adult basic literacy skills (skills at 4th grade level and below)	3.8
Pre-GED (skills from 5th through 8th grade levels)	3.7
GED (skills from 9th grade through high school equivalency)	4.1
English as a second language (ESL)	4.4
Family literacy	3.6

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

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Table 4a.—Standard error of the percent of public library outlets that offered any adult literacy programs during the last 12 months, and of those, standard errors of the percent that offered programs specifically for certain groups: 2000

Adult literacy programs	Percent
Offered adult literacy programs	1.3
Offered adult literacy programs specifically for:	
Limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants	4.5
Parents	4.9
High school dropouts	4.0
Adults with learning disabilities	3.5
Adults with hearing impairments	2.3

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 5a.—Among public library outlets that did not offer adult literacy programs, standard errors of the percentage distribution of the importance of specific reasons in the outlet's decision not to offer adult literacy programs: 2000

Reason	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
This outlet does not have the staff or resources to offer adult literacy programs	1.0	1.6	1.9
Other groups or educational institutions in the community (including other library outlets) offer adult literacy programs	1.8	1.5	2.1
The programming in this outlet emphasizes other groups (e.g., children, senior citizens)	2.1	2.1	2.1
The community served by this outlet does not have a strong need for adult literacy programs	2.3	2.3	1.7

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 6a.—Standard errors of the percent of public library outlets that did not offer adult literacy programs, and standard errors of the percent without adult literacy programs indicating that specific reasons were very important in the outlet's decision, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Did not offer adult literacy programs	Reasons for not offering adult literacy programs			
		This outlet does not have the staff or resources to offer adult literacy programs	Other groups or educational institutions in the community offer adult literacy programs	The programming in this outlet emphasizes other groups	The community served by this outlet does not have a strong need for adult literacy programs
All public library outlets	1.3	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.7
Number of library visits per week					
Small: Less than 300	1.7	3.6	4.0	3.9	3.3
Medium: 300 to 1,499	2.5	2.6	3.2	3.2	3.0
Large: 1,500 or more	3.0	3.3	3.4	3.5	2.0
Metropolitan status					
Urban	3.3	4.3	3.5	3.8	2.8
Suburban	2.3	3.1	4.2	3.7	3.2
Rural	1.8	2.7	2.7	3.5	2.7

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 7a.—Standard errors of the percent of public library outlets that offered specific types of adult lifelong learning programs during the last 12 months, by number of visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Computer/ Internet instruction	Book/film discussions or presentations	Cultural performances	Recreational activities (e.g., crafts, travel, hobbies)	Parenting skills	Financial planning/ investment information	Employment/ career guidance	College/ continuing education guidance	Citizenship preparation
All public library outlets.....	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.3	0.8
Number of library visits per week									
Small: Less than 300	3.7	2.9	2.3	2.9	1.6	1.6	1.9	2.2	1.8
Medium: 300 to 1,499	3.3	3.1	3.8	3.6	2.7	2.6	2.4	2.9	1.2
Large: 1,500 or more	2.5	3.1	2.4	3.2	3.1	3.2	2.2	2.3	1.1
Metropolitan status									
Urban.....	3.3	2.8	3.4	3.1	3.0	2.8	3.4	3.6	1.9
Suburban.....	4.1	2.8	2.9	3.6	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.4	1.6
Rural	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.2	1.8	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.3

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

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Table 8a.—Standard errors of the percent of public library outlets that offered adult lifelong learning programs specifically for certain groups during the last 12 months, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Senior citizens	Parents	Limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants	Adults with physical disabilities	Adults with learning disabilities
All public library outlets	1.5	1.5	1.0	0.8	0.7
Number of library visits per week					
Small: Less than 300	2.6	2.2	0.7	1.3	0.7
Medium: 300 to 1,499	2.4	2.8	1.9	1.7	1.4
Large: 1,500 or more	2.6	2.9	2.2	1.6	1.2
Metropolitan status					
Urban	3.5	3.5	2.7	1.5	2.0
Suburban	3.1	3.2	1.8	1.3	1.0
Rural	2.0	2.1	1.1	1.2	1.0

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 9a.—Standard errors of the percentage distribution of the extent to which public library outlets report specific factors as barriers to the outlet's offering lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities: 2000

Factor	Not a barrier	Minor barrier	Moderate barrier	Major barrier
Lack of staff training in working with adults with disabilities	1.4	1.5	2.0	1.7
Lack of assistive/adaptive devices for adults with disabilities	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.8
Insufficient library materials for the blind or physically disabled	1.8	1.5	1.7	2.0
Insufficient accessibility to library facilities for the disabled	1.6	1.0	0.9	1.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 10a.—Standard errors of the percent of public library outlets reporting that specific factors are major barriers to the outlet offering lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Lack of staff training in working with adults with disabilities	Lack of assistive/ adaptive devices for adults with disabilities	Insufficient library materials for the blind or physically disabled	Insufficient accessibility to library facilities for the disabled
All public library outlets	1.7	1.8	2.0	1.2
Number of library visits per week				
Small: Less than 300	3.5	3.9	3.8	2.8
Medium: 300 to 1,499	3.1	3.1	3.4	1.8
Large: 1,500 or more	3.0	2.4	2.2	1.3
Metropolitan status				
Urban	3.7	4.0	3.4	2.5
Suburban	4.0	3.1	3.8	2.3
Rural	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 11a.—Standard errors of the percentage distribution of the extent to which public library outlets report specific factors as barriers to the outlet's ability to provide access to the Internet to adults for their independent use, by whether the outlet provides Internet access: 2000

Factor, by whether the outlet provides Internet access	Not a barrier	Minor barrier	Moderate barrier	Major barrier
Insufficient space for computers				
All public library outlets	1.9	1.3	1.8	1.8
Outlets providing Internet access	2.2	1.4	1.9	1.9
Outlets not providing Internet access	5.6	1.2	4.3	6.0
Insufficient number of computers with Internet access				
All public library outlets	1.9	1.3	1.2	1.4
Outlets providing Internet access	2.0	1.4	1.3	1.3
Outlets not providing Internet access	5.7	1.8	3.6	6.3
Insufficient number of telecommunications lines for Internet access				
All public library outlets	1.8	1.3	1.2	1.3
Outlets providing Internet access	2.0	1.4	1.2	1.2
Outlets not providing Internet access	5.1	3.6	5.2	7.4
Lack of library staff to assist Internet users				
All public library outlets	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.2
Outlets providing Internet access	1.9	1.6	1.7	1.1
Outlets not providing Internet access	7.4	3.4	3.9	8.2
Lack of specialized training among library staff				
All public library outlets	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.1
Outlets providing Internet access	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.2
Outlets not providing Internet access	8.1	6.3	3.8	5.7

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

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Table 12a.—Standard errors of the percent of public library outlets reporting that specific factors are major barriers to the outlet's ability to provide access to the Internet to adults for their independent use, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000

Library outlet characteristic	Insufficient space for computers	Insufficient number of computers with Internet access	Insufficient number of telecommunications lines for Internet access	Lack of library staff to assist Internet users	Lack of specialized training among library staff
All public library outlets	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1
Number of library visits per week					
Small: Less than 300	3.3	3.2	3.2	2.7	2.6
Medium: 300 to 1,499	2.9	2.2	1.7	2.3	1.5
Large: 1,500 or more	2.5	2.2	1.4	1.9	1.6
Metropolitan status					
Urban	3.3	2.7	2.3	2.3	1.3
Suburban	3.0	3.0	2.6	2.1	1.5
Rural	2.9	2.2	2.2	2.2	1.8

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

Table 13.—Standard errors for the figures and for data not shown in tables: 2000

Item	Estimate	Standard error
Figure 1: Percentage distribution of public library outlets, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000		
Number of library visits per week: Small: Less than 300	37	1.7
Number of library visits per week: Medium: 300 to 1,499	37	2.0
Number of library visits per week: Large: 1,500 or more	26	1.3
Metropolitan status: Urban	16	0.7
Metropolitan status: Suburban	29	0.7
Metropolitan status: Rural	55	0.5
Figure 2: Percent of public library outlets that offered adult literacy programs during the last 12 months, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000		
All public library outlets	17	1.3
Number of library visits per week: Small: Less than 300	5	1.7
Number of library visits per week: Medium: 300 to 1,499	19	2.5
Number of library visits per week: Large: 1,500 or more	31	3.0
Metropolitan status: Urban	26	3.3
Metropolitan status: Suburban	16	2.3
Metropolitan status: Rural	15	1.8
Figure 3: Percent of public library outlets that provide Internet access to adults for their independent use, by number of library visits per week and metropolitan status: 2000		
All public library outlets	92	0.9
Number of library visits per week: Small: Less than 300	84	2.3
Number of library visits per week: Medium: 300 to 1,499	96	1.0
Number of library visits per week: Large: 1,500 or more	98	0.8
Metropolitan status: Urban	93	2.1
Metropolitan status: Suburban	92	1.8
Metropolitan status: Rural	92	1.5
Chapter 2, section on adult literacy program offerings		
Percent of library outlets offering adult literacy programs that offered such programs at offsite locations during the last 12 months	27	3.9
Percent of library outlets offering adult literacy programs that used computers as a hands-on learning tool for adult literacy programs during the last 12 months	52	4.8

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, "Survey on Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets," 2000.

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Appendix C

Survey Questionnaire

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS IN PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS

FAST RESPONSE SURVEY SYSTEM

FORM APPROVED
O.M.B. NO.: 1850-0733
EXPIRATION DATE: 07/2002

This survey is authorized by law (P.L. 103-382). While participation in this survey is voluntary, your cooperation is critical to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely.

DEFINITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire is designed to be completed by the person who is most knowledgeable about programs for adults in your individual library outlet. For the purposes of this survey:

Library outlet is a unit (usually a building) that provides direct public library service. An outlet may be a main or central library, a branch library, a bookmobile, or a books-by-mail only service.

Typical week, from Sunday through Saturday, is a time that is neither unusually busy nor unusually slow and is unaffected by holiday time, vacation periods for key staff, or unusual events in the community or in the library outlet. It would be a week in which the library outlet is open for regular hours.

Programs means planned activities for groups or individuals that are offered by libraries to provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment. Library tours and brief overviews of library services are not considered programs for this questionnaire.

For this questionnaire, your library outlet should be considered as offering a program if:

- **the outlet provides funding, materials, or staff to support the program, or**
- **the library system runs the program within or on behalf of the library outlet.**

Programs offered by the library outlet may take place in the library or at off-site locations.

Programs that use library space rented or made available to outside groups with no other involvement of the library outlet or system are *not* considered offerings of the library outlet.

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IF ABOVE INFORMATION IS INCORRECT, PLEASE MAKE CORRECTIONS DIRECTLY ON LABEL.

Name of person completing form:_____ Telephone:_____

Title/position: _____ E-mail: _____

Best days and times to reach you (in case of questions): _____

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FRSS Form No. 66, 10/2000

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1. Please estimate the number of persons (of all ages) who entered your library outlet in a typical week during spring 2000. *(Please use door counts rather than circulation information.)* Persons per week: _____

2. How many hours was your library outlet open to the public during a typical week in spring 2000?

   Hours per week: _____

Programs means planned activities for groups or individuals that are offered by libraries to provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment. Library tours and brief overviews of library services are not considered programs for this questionnaire.

For this questionnaire, your library outlet should be considered as offering a program if:

- **the outlet provides funding, materials, or staff to support the program, or**
- **the library system runs the program within or on behalf of the library outlet.**

Programs offered by the library outlet may take place in the library or at off-site locations.

Programs that use library space rented or made available to outside groups with no other involvement of the library outlet or system are *not* considered offerings of the library outlet.

Programs for Adult Literacy

3. During the last 12 months, did your library outlet offer any adult literacy programs, including family literacy and English as a second language instruction for adults? *(Please refer to the information in the box above about when your library outlet should be considered as offering a program.)*

   Yes ..... 1 *(Continue with question 4.)* No ..... 2 *(Skip to question 9.)*

4. Did your library outlet offer any of the following types of adult literacy programs during the last 12 months? *(Circle one on each line.)*

		Yes	No
a.	Adult basic literacy skills (skills at 4th grade level and below)	1	2
b.	Pre-GED (skills from 5th through 8th grade levels)	1	2
c.	GED (skills from 9th grade through high school equivalency)	1	2
d.	English as a second language (ESL)	1	2
e.	Family literacy	1	2
f.	Other *(specify)* _____	1	2

5. During the last 12 months, did your library outlet offer any adult literacy programs specifically for the following groups? *(Circle one on each line.)*

		Yes	No
a.	High school dropouts	1	2
b.	Limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants	1	2
c.	Adults with learning disabilities	1	2
d.	Adults with hearing impairments	1	2
e.	Parents	1	2
f.	Other *(specify)* _____	1	2

6. To what extent are the factors listed below barriers to your library outlet's offering adult literacy programs? *(Circle one on each line.)*

		Not a barrier	Minor barrier	Moderate barrier	Major barrier
a.	Lack of library space for adult literacy programs	1	2	3	4
b.	Lack of staff trained in adult literacy programs	1	2	3	4
c.	Lack of staff with foreign language skills	1	2	3	4
d.	Insufficient literacy workbooks and reading materials	1	2	3	4
e.	Insufficient English as a second language materials	1	2	3	4
f.	Other *(specify)* _____	1	2	3	4

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7. During the last 12 months, did your library outlet offer any adult literacy programs at off-site locations?

Yes ..... 1 No 2

8. During the last 12 months, did your library outlet use computers as a hands-on learning tool for any adult literacy programs?

Yes ..... 1 *(Skip to question 10.)* No ..... 2 *(Skip to question 10.)*

9. How important are the reasons listed below in your library outlet's decision *not* to offer adult literacy programs? *(Circle one on each line.)*

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
a. Other groups or educational institutions in the community (including other library outlets) offer adult literacy programs	1	2	3
b. The community served by this outlet does not have a strong need for adult literacy programs	1	2	3
c. The programming in this outlet emphasizes other groups (e.g., children, senior citizens)	1	2	3
d. This outlet does not have the staff or resources to offer adult literacy programs	1	2	3
e. Other *(specify)* _____	1	2	3

Programs for Adult Lifelong Learning

10. Did your library outlet offer any of the following types of adult lifelong learning programs during the last 12 months? (*Circle one on each line. Please refer to the information in the box on the previous page about when your library outlet should be considered as offering a program.*)

	Yes	No
a. Citizenship preparation	1	2
b. College/continuing education guidance	1	2
c. Employment/career guidance	1	2
d. Financial planning/investment information	1	2
e. Book/film discussions or presentations	1	2
f. Cultural performances	1	2
g. Recreational activities (e.g., crafts, travel, hobbies)	1	2
h. Parenting skills	1	2
i. Computer/Internet instruction	1	2
j. Other *(specify)* _____	1	2

11. During the last 12 months, did your library outlet offer any adult lifelong learning programs *specifically* for the following groups? *(Circle one on each line.)*

	Yes	No
a. Adults with learning disabilities	1	2
b. Adults with physical disabilities, including visual or hearing impairments/other health impairments	1	2
c. Limited English speaking and/or recent immigrants	1	2
d. Senior citizens	1	2
e. Parents	1	2
f. Other *(specify)* _____	1	2

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12. To what extent are the factors listed below barriers to your library outlet's offering programs for adult lifelong learning for **adults with learning and/or physical disabilities**? *(Circle one on each line.)*

	Not a barrier	Minor barrier	Moderate barrier	Major barrier
a. Insufficient accessibility to library facilities for the disabled	1	2	3	4
b. Lack of staff training in working with adults with disabilities	1	2	3	4
c. Lack of assistive/adaptive devices for adults with disabilities	1	2	3	4
d. Insufficient library materials for the blind or physically disabled	1	2	3	4
e. Other *(specify)* _____	1	2	3	4

Internet Access

13. Does your library outlet provide **Internet access** to adults for their independent use?

Yes..... 1 No..... 2

14. To what extent are the factors listed below barriers to your library outlet's ability to provide **access to the Internet** to adults for their independent use? *(Circle one on each line.)*

	Not a barrier	Minor barrier	Moderate barrier	Major barrier
Lack of library staff to assist Internet users	1	2	3	4
Lack of specialized training among library staff	1	2	3	4
Insufficient number of computers with Internet access	1	2	3	4
Insufficient space for computers	1	2	3	4
Insufficient number of telecommunications lines for Internet access	1	2	3	4
Other *(specify)* _____	1	2	3	4

15. During the last 12 months, did your *library outlet or system* apply for funding through the E-rate telecommunications discount program? If yes, did your *library outlet or system* receive funding through the E-rate program? *(Circle one on each line.)*

a. Applied for E-rate funding Yes..... 1 No..... 2 Don't know..... 3
b. Received E-rate funding Yes..... 1 No..... 2 Don't know..... 3 Not applicable..... 4

Staff Resources

16. Does your library *outlet or system* employ any staff for whom the following areas are a major responsibility? *(Circle one on each line.)*

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Adult literacy	1	2	3
b. Adults with English as a second language	1	2	3
c. Senior citizens	1	2	3
d. Adults with learning and/or physical disabilities	1	2	3
e. Parents	1	2	3
f. Computer/Internet instruction	1	2	3

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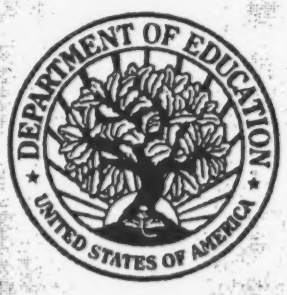

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